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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: PHUM, PREL, KPAO, HRIGHTS, EUN, LU
SUBJECT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VOICES CONCERNS OVER GUANTANAMO

REF: A. STATE 108160
B. STATE 82735
C. STATE 26147

1. (U) SUMMARY: On Monday July 3, poloffs met with four representatives from Amnesty International Luxembourg (AI), who delivered 1888 petitions addressed to President Bush which call for the closure of the Guantanamo detention center. While welcoming the President's statement that he would like to close Guantanamo and the recent Supreme Court ruling regarding detainee trials, they urged a quick timeline for closure and expressed concern about several policies. To requests for the USG position on the recent Supreme Court ruling, the recent suicides, and other USG policies, post responded using reftel A-C talking points and press guidance. Given the cordial tone of the meeting, post expects continued close cooperation with AI on human rights issues in Luxembourg. END SUMMARY.

AI Voices Concerns Over Guantanamo

2. (U) In meeting with poloffs, AI Deputy Chairman Nuno Fontes, Deputy Director Chiara Trombetta, Embassy Relations Coordinator

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Fernand Walch, and Guantanamo Action Group member Sophie Barbiut delivered 1888 petitions addressed to President Bush, collected in Luxembourg since December 2005, which call for the closure of the Guantanamo detention center. AI reps welcomed President Bush's recent announcement that he would like to close Guantanamo and, in addition to the points made in the petition (paragraph 7), expressed the following concerns. They argued that the U.S. definition of torture falls short of that in the Geneva Convention, and certain practices (i.e. sleep deprivation and forced standing for 24 hour periods) that the USG does not identify as torture are still inhumane and should be stopped. AI reps welcomed the general improvement in conditions at the facility but said that Camp 5 conditions still fall short of international standards. They raised the recent coordinated suicides as evidence of problems at the center, citing isolation, detainment conditions, and psychological distress as issues of major concern. AI reps also asked that UN experts be allowed to return to Guantanamo and be granted ample access to detainees.

3. (U) AI hailed the recent Supreme Court ruling as a step in the right direction and urged the USG to formally charge detainees and transfer them for trial or release them. They pointed out that only about 10 detainees have been formally charged and urged the quick release of those not charged. For those who are not formally charged of any crime, AI suggested giving detainees the option to return to their home country or helping them seek asylum in a third-party country. The AI reps voiced concern over the choices of third countries (citing the Uighur detainees now in Albania), saying that attention must be paid to the political climate and chances former detainees will have at integration.

----- Embassy Response -----

4. (U) Post responded to all issues using reftel A-C, "Rapid Response" and other press guidance to clarify USG policy on detainees, our commitment to respecting detainees' rights, opposition to torture, and improvement to policies regarding and conditions of detainees. Poloffs highlighted various examples of the USG's long-standing commitment to human rights. Understanding of the challenges entailed in fighting the war on terror, AI reps expressed hope that the President will work quickly to close the facility and bring detainees to trial.

----- Press Angle -----

5. (U) AI had initially requested a June 26 meeting to coincide with the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and they organized a rally of about two dozen people in central Luxembourg's

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Place d'Armes on that day. Because of scheduling difficulties, post arranged the meeting for later that week. The AI press release distributed June 23 stated that their request for a meeting with the Embassy was unconfirmed. The leftist paper, Tageblatt, with whom the Embassy has had a rocky relationship, printed July 26 that the Embassy refused to meet with AI. AI reps told poloffs they intend to send a letter to the paper clarifying the point.

6. (SBU) COMMENT: AI representatives expressed several times their appreciation for the meeting and seemed a bit hesitant to continue raising criticisms as poloff explained USG positions. Despite the contentious subject matter, the conversation remained cordial and seemed to improve AI reps' understanding of the challenges in fighting this new kind of war. AI's plan to write to Tageblatt supporting the USG is certainly also a welcome development. Post expects continued cooperation on Luxembourg human rights matters.
END COMMENT.

7. (U) PETITION TEXT:

--Mr. President,

--Considering that all human beings have inalienable rights that must be respected in all circumstances;

--Gravely concerned by the violation of basic human rights of those individuals imprisoned by the United States and by other countries on behalf of the United States under the umbrella of the "War on Terror";

--We Call for:

--The Closure of the Guantanamo detention camp in Cuba;

--The liberation of Guantanamo prisoners or their transfer to the United States so that they receive fair trials;

--The assurance that none of the detainees be transferred to a country where they might be subjected to torture, poor treatment, arbitrary detentions or a death sentence;

--The end of the practice of "extraordinary rendition" of prisoners and the secret transfer of prisoners between countries;

--The end of imprisonments in secret locations, secret detentions and "disappearances";

--The initiation of a full, independent and impartial investigation into the detentions linked to the "War on Terror" and the allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of

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those prisoners.
END PETITION TEXT.

8. (U) Drafted: Poloff Caroline Savage and Pol/Econ Intern Bryson
Giles.

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